

Protecting Young Workers in Massachusetts

**Recommendations of the
Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative
Task Force**

JANUARY 23, 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CHALLENGE

More than 77,000 teens work in the Commonwealth. Youth reap many benefits from work, including acquisition of job and social skills, enhanced feelings of competence and independence, and income for personal or family use. Work can serve as an important learning environment reinforcing academic skills and providing hands-on learning opportunities. Families express approval and pride when teens enter the workforce. Massachusetts employers have come to rely on teens to fulfill many positions and are invested in ensuring that working teens have a positive experience.

Yet, teens are also vulnerable at work, and, in fact, have on-the-job injury rates nearly twice that of adults. In Massachusetts, it is estimated that several thousand teens less than 18 years of age seek treatment in emergency departments for on-the-job injuries each year. Over 400 teens less than 18 years of age file workers' compensation claims annually for injuries resulting in five or more lost work days. Nationally, the average medical cost for an injured teen is \$2450 (in 2001 dollars); total medical costs for occupational injuries to 16 and 17 year olds were approximately \$141 million in 2001.

Workers, in general, can be exposed to many hazards on the job that can result in injury, illness, or even death. Young workers, however, are at increased risk. They are sometimes asked to perform tasks for which they lack the size, strength or experience. As new workers, they are often unfamiliar with workplace hazards, ways to avoid injuries, and their rights as workers. Positive traits, such as energy, enthusiasm and a need for increased challenge, combined with a reluctance to ask questions or make demands, lead to their taking on tasks they are not prepared to do safely

The challenge is not *whether* teens should work, but how to assure that their jobs are safe and do not interfere with their education.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Over the past year, the Mass Young Worker Initiative Task Force comprised of representatives from youth, community, and health care organizations, along with schools, employers, unions, and parents met together with representatives of government agencies to discuss risks to teens at work and barriers to overcoming these risks. The Task Force developed a comprehensive strategy to promote positive and safe employment for working teens in Massachusetts and address gaps relating to their health and safety. The resulting report and recommendations are intended to:

1. Form a blueprint for state policy makers to ensure positive and safe work experiences for youth;
2. Serve as a guide for employers, schools, unions, professional organizations, parents and community organizations that interface with youth and are poised to better educate and protect youth in the work force; and
3. Reduce work-related injuries among youth in the Massachusetts workforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force put forth a series of recommendations to address the issues raised above. The five priority areas identified to address the major gaps noted by the Task Force include:

- A strong statewide infrastructure, including a standing inter-agency working group,
- A central body, such as a non-governmental resource center, whose sole and ongoing function is to promote positive and safe working experiences for youth,
- Updated child labor laws that reflect current realities,
- An effective work permit process, and
- Increased awareness of employers, parents, health care providers, educators, researchers, community organizations and regulators, as well as working youth themselves.

The Task Force developed 16 objectives and 38 recommendations covering school-based strategies; improvements in the work permit process; work-based strategies; public information and community-based initiatives; and the state infrastructure to carry out the recommendations in each of these areas. Implementation of the recommendations will provide teens in Massachusetts with the special protection in the workplace that they deserve.

School-Based Initiatives

Objective 1	Students receive workplace health and safety information in the classroom and other school-sponsored programs.
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Recommendation 1: Promote workplace health and safety education in schools.

Recommendation 2: Address workplace health and safety in school-sponsored job readiness and placement programs.

Objective 2	Students, parents, and school personnel have easy access to information and resources on workplace health and safety and child labor laws.
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Recommendation 3: Integrate workplace health and safety into appropriate subject areas of higher education programs that prepare future teachers.

Recommendation 4: Disseminate informational materials on workplace health and safety and the child labor laws through existing programs and mechanisms in schools.

Strengthening the Role of Work Permits

Objective 1	Employers, minors, and parents have access to basic, easy to read information about the child labor laws.
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Recommendation 5: Modify the application for the work permit and the work permit form to include a summary of the applicable state and federal child labor laws on the back of the forms.

Recommendation 6: Provide teens with educational materials on the child labor laws and workplace health and safety when work permits are requested.

Objective 2 Barriers to compliance with the work permit process are minimized.



Recommendation 7: Modify the work permit statute to allow the requirement for a medical examination to be fulfilled by any medical examination of the minor within the previous 12 months, consistent with the requirement for school sports physicals.



Recommendation 8: Modify the state child labor laws to allow a minor to obtain a work permit in either the school district in which s/he lives *or* the district in which s/he attends school.

Objective 3 Issuing agents are equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively carry out the work permitting function.

Recommendation 9: Establish a standardized curriculum to train issuing agents in carrying out the permitting function.



Recommendation 10: Modify the educational certificate form for teens aged 16 and 17 years old to include a “nature of work” field that describes the prospective employment as currently required for teens aged 14 and 15 years old.

Recommendation 11: Develop a software application for processing work permits to assist issuing agents in determining if the prospective employment is consistent with applicable child labor laws.

Objective 4 Standardize the work permit process for all minors, aged 14 through 17.



Recommendation 12: Develop a single work permit and work permit application form for all youth 14 through 17 years of age. The health care provider’s sign-off would continue to be limited to 14 and 15 year old adolescents.



Recommendation 13: Require employers, minors, and parents to sign the work permit application and the work permit certifying that they have read and understand the child labor laws as summarized on the application and the work permit itself.

Work-Based Initiatives

Objective 1 Employers understand the child labor laws, young worker health and safety issues, and the unique challenges of supervising youth.

Recommendation 14: Provide information on the child labor laws, on young worker health and safety, and on supervising youth to employers through trade associations and other employer organization meetings, conferences and other venues.

Recommendation 15: Annually distribute an informational fact sheet on the child labor laws, young worker health and safety, and supervising youth to employers through the Internal Revenue Service's yearly mailing to employers.

Recommendation 16: Include young worker health and safety as part of the consulting services provided to employers by their safety consultants.

Objective 2	Employers provide job-specific health and safety training to young workers and implement hazard controls in jobs commonly held by youth.
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Recommendation 17: Distribute to employers industry-specific materials on young worker health and safety with detailed information on hazard identification and solutions for reducing or eliminating those hazards found in the jobs most often held by youth.

Recommendation 18: Promote training for those who supervise young workers about the child labor laws, young worker health and safety, and supervising youth.

Recommendation 19: Pilot an age-appropriate training program for young workers as a collaborative effort between one industry, its key trade association, and its insurer.

Recommendation 20: Pilot the implementation of a significant safety innovation/engineering control in a particular industry where jobs are commonly held by youth, in partnership with its key trade association, insurer, and an academic institution.

Objective 3	The Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General has appropriate mechanisms and adequate resources to effectively enforce the Massachusetts Child Labor Laws.
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Recommendation 21: Establish civil sanctions against employers who violate the MA child labor laws.

DISSENTING OPINION: Representatives of the business that most consistently participated in the writing of this report did not agree with this recommendation.

Recommendation 22: Explore the development of a diversion program for fines paid by violators of child labor laws.

Objective 4	Young workers receive information about protections afforded them by unions through their collective bargaining agreement and through the support of their union representative.
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Recommendation 23: Conduct educational sessions for newly employed young union members.

Recommendation 24: Develop partnerships with schools to educate students about the role of unions in promoting safe and healthy workplaces.

Community-Based Initiatives

Objective 1 The public is aware of young worker health and safety issues.

Recommendation 25: Conduct a statewide campaign to raise public awareness of young worker health and safety and other issues related to youth employment.

Recommendation 26: Involve teens in educating members of their communities about young worker health and safety.

Recommendation 27: Distribute educational materials on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety to community members through existing organizations that serve parents and consumers.

Objective 2 Training on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety is integrated into community-based programs that provide job readiness and placement services to youth.

Recommendation 28: Offer training on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety to professionals working in community-based programs that provide job readiness and placement services to youth.

Recommendation 29: Incorporate health and safety training for youth into government-funded job readiness and placement programs.

Objective 3 Health care providers understand the child labor laws and young worker health and safety issues in order to provide their teen patients with accurate information and to be effective advocates in their community.

Recommendation 30: Provide health care practitioners with information about the child labor laws and young worker health and safety, as well as guidance on counseling their adolescent patients about prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses.

Recommendation 31: Provide information to health care practitioners about their responsibility, under Massachusetts public health regulations, to report work-related injuries to minors working in the commonwealth.

Infrastructure Support

Objective 1 Reliable information on work-related injuries to youth and the extent of youth employment in Massachusetts is available to guide efforts to prevent work-related injuries to youth.

Recommendation 32: Maintain and enhance the existing Massachusetts statewide surveillance system for work-related injuries to youth.

Recommendation 33: Explore centralizing data from the work-permit system to track the extent and distribution of youth employment in Massachusetts.

Objective 2 Massachusetts child labor laws are effectively enforced and reflect current conditions at workplaces where youth are commonly employed.



Recommendation 34: Amend the state laws governing the allowable work hours (per day and per week), as well as the starting and stopping times, for 14 and 15 year old adolescents to be consistent with the more stringent federal laws.



Recommendation 35: Regularly review and update the Massachusetts child labor laws to ensure effectiveness in protecting today's youth at work.

DISSENTING OPINION: Representatives of the business that most consistently participated in the writing of this report did not agree with Task Force Recommendations 34 and 35 to amend the child labor laws pertaining to hours of work and prohibited occupations.

Objective 3 Government agencies coordinate their efforts to protect young workers in the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 36: Establish a permanent, formal inter-agency working group to promote healthful employment for youth in Massachusetts.

Recommendation 37: Establish memoranda of understanding to formalize the referrals and information sharing among the above agencies.

Objective 4 Institutionalize non-governmental efforts to protect young workers as a means of providing leadership and coordination between public and private sector agencies and organizations in order to promote safe and positive work experiences for all youth in the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 38: Establish a non-governmental, statewide Center for Young Worker Safety.

INTRODUCTION

“ALL YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE PLACES FOR LIVING, LEARNING AND WORKING.”

- **One of five goals supporting positive youth development endorsed by the Youth Development Advisory Council and the Massachusetts Adolescent Health Council**

Work is an important part of the lives of many adolescents in the Commonwealth. In Massachusetts, close to 30% of teens 15-17 years of age are employed at any given time.¹ Nationwide it is estimated 80% have held jobs by the time they leave high school.² Most of these teens not only hold jobs, they attend school full-time, participate in sports and other extra-curricular activities, and spend time with their families and friends.

Youth reap many benefits from work, including acquisition of job and social skills, enhanced feelings of competence and independence, and income for personal or family use. Work can serve as an important learning environment reinforcing academic skills and providing hands-on learning opportunities. Families express approval and pride when teens enter the workforce. Massachusetts employers have come to rely on teens to fulfill many positions and have an investment in ensuring that working teens have a positive experience. Yet working youth also face risks to their health and safety, despite protections offered by federal and state child labor laws.

Over the past year, the Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative Task Force met with representatives of government agencies to discuss risks to teens at work and to develop a comprehensive strategy to promote positive and safe employment for working teens in Massachusetts and to address gaps relating to their health and safety. This task force included representatives from youth, community, and health care organizations, along with unions, schools, employers, and parents.

This report and recommendations are intended to serve as a blueprint for state policy makers in their efforts to ensure positive and safe work experiences for youth. The report should serve as a guide for employers, schools, unions, professional organizations, and community organizations that interface with youth and are poised to protect youth in the work force. Finally, the report should inform both youth who plan to work and their parents. We hope this report inspires readers to meet the challenge of better protecting the more than 70,000 youth of Massachusetts who work in our state's businesses.

The Challenge

When we think about risks for teens, we generally consider their risks on the road, on the sports field, or in the streets. We rarely think about their part-time after-school or weekend jobs as a source of concern. Yet, teens are also vulnerable at work, and, in fact, have on-the-job injury rates nearly twice that of adults.³ In Massachusetts, it is estimated that several thousand teens less than 18 years of age seek treatment in emergency departments for on-the-job injuries each year. Over 400 teens less than 18 years of age file workers' compensation claims annually for

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey 2001, accessed December 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.bls.gov/cps>.

² "Protecting youth at work: health, safety, and development of working children and adolescents in the United States," Committee on the Health and Safety Implications of Child Labor. National Academy of Sciences, 1998.

³ D Castillo, L Davis, D Wegman, "Young Workers," *Occupational Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, 14(3), July-September 1999:519-536.

injuries resulting in five or more lost work days.⁴ Nationally, the average medical cost for an injured teen is \$2450 (in 2001 dollars); total medical costs for occupational injuries to 16 and 17 year olds were approximately \$141 million in 2001.^{5,6}

Workers can be exposed to many hazards on the job that can result in injury, illness, or even death. Young workers however, are at increased risk. They are sometimes asked to perform tasks for which they lack the size, strength, or experience. As new workers they are often unfamiliar with workplace hazards, ways to avoid injuries, and their rights as workers. Although a common perception is that teens get injured because they are reckless, teens injured on the job often have a very different profile. Positive traits, such as energy, enthusiasm and a need for increased challenge, combined with a reluctance to ask questions or make demands, lead to their taking on tasks they are not prepared to do safely.

In light of these factors thorough training and supervision is even more important for young workers than adults. Yet surveys of working youth indicate that 50% of working teens in Massachusetts do not receive training about how to do the job safely.^{7,8} Training teens about workplace health and safety and their rights and responsibilities on the job is crucial, not only to protect them now, but to provide skills that can be carried into their adult lives as workers and employers of the future.

Over the last 10 years, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has been working with other agencies and community partners to develop and disseminate educational materials on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety. The Department has developed health and safety curricula for use in schools and work-based learning programs. (Appendix A) However, there is little funding available for training youth and employers regarding health and safety concerns teens face at work. The demand for information and training far exceeds the state agencies' capacity to respond.

A proper balance between school and work is also important to the overall health and well being of youth. While some work has been associated with improved academic performance, working long and late hours during the school year has been linked with fatigue, increased drug and alcohol use, and lower educational attainment.

The challenge is not *whether* teens should work, but how to assure that their jobs are safe and do not interfere with their education. While the safety of young workers is primarily the responsibility of their employers, many others in the community - parents, schools, community organizations, health care providers, and government agencies - have important roles to play in protecting youth at work. Yet there is widespread ignorance about the health and safety risks that teens face on the job and about the child labor laws in place to protect them.^{9,10} These laws reflect the longstanding social policy that teens deserve special protection in the workplace.

⁴ Massachusetts Department of Public Health, "Occupational Injuries to Workers Less than 18 Years of Age in Massachusetts, 1993-2000", poster presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, November 2002.

⁵ Children's Safety Network, Economics and Insurance Research Center, Calverton, Maryland 2003

⁶ TR Miller, GM Waehrer, "Costs of occupational injuries to teenagers, United States," *Injury Prevention*, 4(3), September 1998:211-7.

⁷ Massachusetts Department of Public Health, "Preventing Work-related injuries to teens," *Newsletter from the Teens at work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project*, Spring 1998.

⁸ Massachusetts Department of Public Health, "Profile of Brockton Working Teens," Brockton Area Protecting Young Workers Project, Summer 1997.

⁹ Massachusetts Department of Public Health. "Enhancing Young Worker Health and Safety: Focus Group Report," January 19, 1996.

¹⁰ Zakocs, Runyan, Schulman, Everson, and Dunn, "Improving Workplace Safety: Suggestions for working teens," Chapel Hill: UNC Inj Prev Research Center, 1999.

In Massachusetts, ongoing efforts to ensure the health and safety of young workers are fragmented. Five agencies - the US Department of Labor, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, the Massachusetts Departments of Education, Public Health, and Labor and Workforce Development - have responsibilities for ensuring that youth who are employed have positive and safe work experiences. However, a formal mechanism for interagency collaboration is lacking. Parents, health care providers, youth workers, and private sector organizations, such as trade associations, unions, public health advocacy and education organizations, also play roles in protecting working teens, yet they do not have a vehicle for sharing information and coordinating their efforts. Without a coordinated effort, protection of teen workers often falls through the cracks. A comprehensive statewide effort is needed *now* to ensure that young workers are employed in safe jobs, provided with adequate training and supervision, and protected by effective child labor laws that are relevant to today's young workforce.

The Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative Task Force

In the mid 1990s, members of several community groups, academic institutions, and private organizations began meeting with representatives of the relevant state and federal agencies to explore ways to promote positive and healthy employment for youth in Massachusetts. Known as the "Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative," the group recognized the need for broader input from the many stakeholders involved in youth employment. In the summer of 2001, the Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative (MYWI) created a task force inviting the participation of representatives of businesses, unions, schools, the health care community, youth-serving organizations, and parents. The goal of the task force was to develop a report to include recommendations for a comprehensive strategy to protect the health and well-being of teenage workers in Massachusetts. The Task Force agreed that this strategy should:

- Promote positive, safe employment for youth;
- Foster awareness and skills in safety and health that will remain with teenagers throughout their working lives;
- Reduce work-related injuries among youth in the Massachusetts work force; and
- Assure an appropriate balance between work and school.

The Task Force was co-chaired by representatives from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, the Education Development Center, and the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health. It met nine times beginning in September 2001 and focused on four areas:

- School-based strategies
- Improvements in the work permit process;
- Work-based strategies; and
- Public information and community-based initiatives.

In addition, the Task Force addressed the need for strengthening the state infrastructure to carry out the recommendations in each of these areas.

A draft of the full report was distributed to individuals who were initially invited to participate as members of the Task Force, but who were unable to attend the meetings. These individuals were afforded the opportunity to provide input to the final Task Force report. (See Appendix B for a list of Task Force Participants and Reviewers.)

This report contains the 38 recommendations of the MYWI Task Force. Most of these can be implemented within the framework of the existing child labor laws. Where possible, the Task Force has identified possible lead agencies that could be responsible for implementing the recommendations. Recommendations requiring changes in the Massachusetts child labor laws are noted by the symbol of the Massachusetts State House.

Improving the health and safety of working youth and preventing injuries will require the combined efforts of employers, parents, health care providers, educators, researchers, community organizations, and regulators, as well as working youth themselves. This report focuses on strategies to which all stakeholders can offer their commitment. In only two instances the Task Force did not reach consensus. The dissenting opinions have been noted and summarized below the recommendations proposed by the majority of the group.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

School-Based Initiatives

Goal: Schools play an active role in promoting healthy and safe work experiences for students.

The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Education is:

“To improve the quality of the public education system so that students are adequately prepared for higher education, rewarding employment, continued education, and responsible citizenship. We carry out this mission in partnerships with Massachusetts school districts and other organizations that provide educational programs and services. Students, parents, teachers and other educators, elected officials, business and community leaders, and the public all are stakeholders in the work of the Department to improve schools and raise student achievement.”

An integral part of this mission is to help prepare students for rewarding employment. As such, schools have the dual responsibility of engaging youth in skill development and ensuring that job/internship placements offer students safe, healthy, and positive work environments.

All students should have safe, productive and satisfying work experiences, whether in jobs they have secured on their own or ones in which they have been placed through school-to-career, cooperative education programs, or through their enrollment in career and technical education.

Schools have many opportunities to prepare students for work experiences and to integrate workplace health and safety lessons. Whether through an existing course of study or a job placement program that utilizes the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Toolkit, health and safety needs to be addressed. Below is a list of recommendations to guide schools in playing a more active role in promoting healthy and safe work for students.

Objective 1	Students receive workplace health and safety information in the classroom and other school-sponsored programs.
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Recommendation 1: Promote workplace health and safety education in schools.

(Lead Agency: Department of Education)

This can be accomplished by:

- Promoting the integration of workplace health and safety information into existing courses consistent with current guidelines, regulations, and curriculum frameworks;¹¹
- Disseminating existing curricula and supporting materials that address workplace health and safety and the child labor laws to schools, accompanied by appropriate technical assistance and teacher training; and
- Developing new workplace health and safety curricula as needed.

¹¹ Curriculum Frameworks are statewide guidelines for learning, teaching, and assessment used to develop curricula.

Recommendation 2: Address workplace health and safety in school-sponsored job readiness and placement programs.¹²

(Lead Agency: Department of Education)

This can be accomplished by:

- Ensuring that school personnel involved in job readiness and placement programs have been adequately trained in the field of workplace health and safety and the child labor laws and are equipped to assess the safety of the workplaces in which they place students;
- Promoting train-the-trainer courses¹³ for technical teachers (vocational education teachers) so that they, in turn, can deliver workplace health and safety information and training to students; and
- Including career-appropriate workplace health and safety as a competency students must achieve in job readiness programs.

Objective 2 Students, parents, and school personnel have easy access to information and resources on workplace health and safety and child labor laws.

Recommendation 3: Integrate workplace health and safety into appropriate subject areas of higher education programs that prepare future teachers.

(Lead Agencies: Department of Education, Boards of Education, and Institutes of Higher Learning)

Recommendation 4: Disseminate informational materials on workplace health and safety and the child labor laws through existing programs and mechanisms in schools. (See Appendix A for a description of existing educational materials.)

(Lead Agency: Department of Education)

Such programs and mechanisms may include:

- Parent/student mailings;
- The work permit process;
- Peer health education programs;
- Education efforts of school-based health centers; and
- Service-based learning opportunities.

¹² School Sponsored Job Readiness and Placement Programs include such programs as school-to-career, cooperative education, and vocational education.

¹³ One means of training school personnel involved in job readiness and placement programs is to promote their attendance at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) 40-hour training course in health and safety. Those trained in this 40-hour course are then qualified to train and certify students in OSHA's 10-hour course on health and safety.

Strengthening the Role of Work Permits

Goal: The work permit process functions to ensure that teens are employed in jobs that do not jeopardize their health or education.

The process of obtaining work permits provides an opportunity to screen prospective jobs before a minor (an individual under the age of 18) is formally employed. Those responsible in the process - employers, teens, parents, school personnel, and medical providers - can all play roles in ensuring that the employment is consistent with the child labor laws and that it will not jeopardize the health or education of the minor.

Under Massachusetts' law, work permits¹⁴ are issued by the school districts in which the minor lives. The process for younger teens differs from that for older teens. Fourteen and fifteen year-old adolescents are required to obtain employment permits for all forms of work. Sixteen and seventeen year-old adolescents are required to obtain educational certificates for most jobs. (See Appendix C for a thorough explanation of the work permit process.)

Currently, school personnel designated to issue work permits ("issuing agents") in many school districts have little, if any, knowledge of workplace health and safety, the child labor laws, or other issues affecting youth at work. Compliance with the requirement for permits is far from complete. In several surveys of working youth in Massachusetts, only 60% reported having work permits or educational certificates. Many employers, parents, teachers, and teens themselves report that they are not familiar with the child labor laws, including the permitting requirements. In addition, there is no centralization of data about the permits issued by or returned to schools. These data would provide crucial information about where minors work and the nature of their work. The existing work permitting system, therefore, needs to be strengthened to better protect the health and well-being of working youth in Massachusetts. Below are several recommendations for improving the process.

Objective 1 Employers, minors, and parents have access to basic, easy to read information about the child labor laws.
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Recommendation 5: Modify the application for the work permit and the work permit form to include a summary of the applicable state and federal child labor laws on the back of the forms.

(Lead Agencies¹⁵: MA Office of the Attorney General, Department of Education, and Department of Labor and Workforce Development)

¹⁴ "Work permit(s)" is a general term referring to both employment permits and educational certificates.

¹⁵ Massachusetts General Law, chapter 149 section 89, places the responsibility for designing the permit forms on the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The Attorney General's Office is charged with approving the forms.

Recommendation 6: Provide teens with educational materials on the child labor laws and workplace health and safety when work permits are requested.

(Lead Agencies: U.S. Department of Labor, MA Office of the Attorney General, and School Superintendents and their designated work permit issuing agents)

Existing materials for teens and their parents may be distributed by issuing agents when a permit is requested; these materials cover the child labor laws, health and safety, wage and hour laws, and workers' compensation. (See Appendix A for a description of existing materials.)

Objective 2 Barriers to compliance with the work permit process are minimized.



Recommendation 7: Modify the work permit statute to allow the requirement for a medical examination to be fulfilled by any medical examination of the minor within the previous 12 months, consistent with the requirement for school sports physicals.



Recommendation 8: Modify the state child labor laws to allow a minor to obtain a work permit in either the school district in which s/he lives or the district in which s/he attends school.

Objective 3 Issuing agents are equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively carry out the work permitting function.

Recommendation 9: Establish a standardized curriculum to train issuing agents in carrying out the permitting function.

(Lead Agency: MA Office of the Attorney General)

This can be accomplished by:

- Developing and disseminating a guide on issuing work permits for school personnel who are designated to perform this function;
- Training issuing agents on properly screening permit applications to ensure that the prospective employment is consistent with applicable laws and is not likely to negatively impact the child's welfare; and
- Developing a database of the names of all designated issuing agents so that pertinent information about the process, training sessions, etc. may be sent to these individuals directly on an ongoing basis.



Recommendation 10: Modify the educational certificate form for teens aged 16 and 17 years old to include a "nature of work" field that describes the prospective employment as currently required for teens aged 14 and 15 years old.

Recommendation 11: Develop a software application for processing work permits to assist issuing agents in determining if the prospective employment is consistent with applicable child labor laws.

(Lead Agency: MA Office of the Attorney General)

Such an application could also contribute to the development of a database of work permits, which could be used to generate a profile of youth employment in Massachusetts. (See Recommendation 33.) Existing software applications for issuing work permits used by other states can serve as models to be adapted for use in Massachusetts.

Objective 4 Standardize the work permit process for all minors, aged 14 through 17.
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Recommendation 12: Develop a single work permit and work permit application form for all youth 14 through 17 years of age. The health care provider's sign-off would continue to be limited to 14 and 15 year old adolescents.



Recommendation 13: Require employers, minors, and parents to sign the work permit application and the work permit certifying that they have read and understand the child labor laws as summarized on the application and the work permit itself. (See Recommendation 5.)

This can be accomplished through a minor legislative modification to the statutes that govern the work permit and application. The modification would require a signature from the employer, the minor applying for the job, and the parent or guardian, indicating that each has read and understands the child labor laws summarized on the forms. (See Recommendation 5.)

Work-Based Initiatives

Goal 1: Employers provide safe working environments for their teen employees.

Employers are responsible for providing safe work environments for workers of all ages. Doing so for young workers, however, presents some special challenges. Because of their inexperience and increased injury rates, young workers have an even greater need than adult workers for quality supervision and training. While proper training and supervision is critical in protecting young people at work, the primary health and safety goal of employers should be the elimination of hazards and the implementation of alternatives where elimination is not feasible.

Ensuring that employers meet the challenge of providing healthy and safe work places for teens requires a multi-level approach. First, employers must be encouraged to eliminate or reduce workplace hazards whenever possible. Second, they must be given information, training opportunities, and tools, to educate them about the child labor laws, health and safety concerns specific to youth, and successful approaches to age appropriate training and supervision. The third strategy is to ensure that employers comply with the child labor laws and health and safety laws through effective enforcement of existing laws. Below are several recommendations for work-based initiatives to promote healthy and safe work environments for teens.

Objective 1 Employers understand the child labor laws, young worker health and safety issues, and the unique challenges of supervising youth.
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Recommendation 14: Provide information on the child labor laws, on young worker health and safety, and on supervising youth to employers through trade associations and other employer organization meetings, conferences and other venues.

Recommendation 15: Annually distribute an informational fact sheet on the child labor laws, young worker health and safety, and supervising youth to employers through the Internal Revenue Service's yearly mailing to employers.

Recommendation 16: Include young worker health and safety as part of the consulting services provided to employers by their safety consultants.

This can be accomplished by having private loss control consultants, compliance assistance specialists (CASs) with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, and consultants with the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety--who advise employers in youth-employing industries--offer employers basic written information on the child labor laws and effective supervision of youth.

Objective 2	Employers provide job-specific health and safety training to young workers and implement hazard controls in jobs commonly held by youth.
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Recommendation 17: Distribute to employers industry-specific materials on young worker health and safety with detailed information on hazard identification and solutions for reducing or eliminating those hazards found in the jobs most often held by youth.

This can be accomplished by:

- Developing short industry-specific hazard checklists for employers to use in conducting regular self-inspections and for worker training;
- Developing guidelines for “best practices” used successfully by employers in various industries;
- Developing injury prevention materials for use by employers in training young workers; and
- Identifying strategic approaches for the dissemination of young worker health and safety materials (e.g., employer-oriented publications, trade association meetings, health and safety groups, human resource management organizations or at the point of contact after an injury has been reported to the MA Department of Public Health).

Recommendation 18: Promote training for those who supervise young workers about the child labor laws, young worker health and safety, and supervising youth.

This can be accomplished by:

- Assessing existing management training programs for inclusion of material on supervising youth at work and other issues of youth employment;
- Incorporating important workplace health and safety messages, including age-appropriate training methods, into management training programs lacking these elements; and
- Creating collaborations among employer organizations or trade associations and government agencies to provide the training.

Recommendation 19: Pilot an age-appropriate training program for young workers as a collaborative effort between one industry, its key trade association, and its insurer.

Results of such a pilot program could include:

- Employer access to industry-specific educational materials targeted to young workers;
- Serving as a model for collaborative partnerships in young worker health and safety training that may be replicated in other industries; and
- Improved health and safety training of young workers.

Recommendation 20: Pilot the implementation of a significant safety innovation/engineering control in a particular industry where jobs are commonly held by youth, in partnership with its key trade association, insurer, and an academic institution.

For example, involve all partners in developing and implementing a method and/or device for safely pouring hot grease to reduce the risk of burns.

Objective 3	The Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General has appropriate mechanisms and adequate resources to effectively enforce the Massachusetts Child Labor Laws.
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Recommendation 21: Establish civil sanctions against employers who violate the MA child labor laws.

This can be accomplished by amending the Massachusetts child labor laws to add civil sanctions, along with penalties, to the existing criminal sanctions and penalties.

DISSENTING OPINION: Representatives of the business that most consistently participated in the writing of this report did not agree with this recommendation.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: Currently, an employer who is charged with violating any provision of the Massachusetts child labor laws must be charged with a crime, which carries both monetary penalties and imprisonment. Under existing law, an employer who is found guilty of violating the laws would have a criminal record. Civil enforcement authority would enable the Attorney General to use an efficient administrative procedure, equivalent to issuing a traffic ticket, rather than prosecuting in criminal court as the sole means of enforcement. The outcome of a civil charge could be a written citation without penalty or the imposition of a monetary fine, depending upon the nature of the violation, the specific impact, and whether or not the violation was committed with intent. The Attorney General currently enforces the state’s wage and hour laws mostly under civil enforcement authority. The procedure includes an appeals process for employers who are aggrieved by the charges. An employer would not risk a criminal record if the matter was resolved through the civil procedure.

Recommendation 22: Explore the development of a diversion program for fines paid by violators of child labor laws.

The funds, rather than going into the state treasury, could be used to:

- Educate employers, youth, and others about the child labor laws, young worker health and safety; and
- Develop “best practices” in health and safety to reduce the number of injuries to teens.

Goal 2: Unions play an active role in promoting healthy and safe work experiences for young workers.

A number of workplaces that employ young people are unionized--including many supermarkets, manufacturing companies, health care facilities, and delivery companies. One central mission of unions is to ensure that all workers have safe and healthy working conditions. Young workers are often unaware of the benefits that may be available to them through their collective bargaining agreements. They may also not realize that their union representative can help them report to their employer, and address, unsafe working conditions, work-related injuries or illnesses, and violations of the child labor laws or other protections.

<p>Objective 4 Young workers receive information about protections afforded them by unions through their collective bargaining agreement and through the support of their union representative.</p>

Recommendation 23: Conduct educational sessions for newly employed young union members.

(Lead Agency: Unions)

Recommendation 24: Develop partnerships with schools to educate students about the role of unions in promoting safe and healthy workplaces.

(Lead Agency: Unions)

Community-Based Initiatives

Goal: Community members are engaged in promoting safe and meaningful work for youth.

Many community members, especially parents, health care providers¹⁶, and youth workers have important roles to play in promoting safe workplaces for teens. Informed parents can give their children information about workplace hazards and guidance in how to effectively raise concerns about health and safety with employers. Health care providers have an excellent opportunity to counsel young patients on occupational health and safety as part of regularly scheduled visits and while signing work permit applications. In addition, as prominent members of a community, health care providers are well positioned to be public advocates for young worker safety. Staff in youth-serving organizations can integrate occupational safety and health into ongoing educational and counseling programs, and can be advocates for teen worker safety with employers and others in the community.

Community members, therefore, should have an awareness of young worker health and safety issues and the child labor laws. Working together, organizations such as Parent Teacher Associations, youth-serving organizations, and community health centers can promote a culture within the community where safe work for youth is the expectation. Below are several recommendations for achieving this goal.

Objective 1 The public is aware of young worker health and safety issues.
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Recommendation 25: Conduct a statewide campaign to raise public awareness of young worker health and safety and other issues related to youth employment.

This can be accomplished by coordinating new efforts with similar, existing efforts by the US Department of Labor and others.

Recommendation 26: Involve teens in educating members of their communities about young worker health and safety.

This can be accomplished by:

- Incorporating young worker health and safety issues into existing community peer education programs; and
- Supporting the development of new peer-led workplace health and safety training programs.

¹⁶ "Health care providers" refers to nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants, community health centers, and providers of school health services.

Recommendation 27: Distribute educational materials on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety to community members through existing organizations that serve parents and consumers. (See Appendix C for a description of existing materials.)

Such organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Regional Prevention Centers;
- Community and state level parent groups;
- Massachusetts Safety Council; and
- Health care insurers.

Objective 2	Training on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety is integrated into community-based programs that provide job readiness and placement services to youth.
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Recommendation 28: Offer training on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety to professionals working in community-based programs that provide job readiness and placement services to youth. (See Appendix A for a description of existing materials.)

Recommendation 29: Incorporate health and safety training for youth into government-funded job readiness and placement programs.¹⁷

Objective 3	Health care providers understand the child labor laws and young worker health and safety issues in order to provide their teen patients with accurate information and to be effective advocates in their community.
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Recommendation 30: Provide health care practitioners with information about the child labor laws and young worker health and safety, as well as guidance on counseling their adolescent patients about prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses. (See Appendix C for a description of existing materials.)

(Lead Agency: MA Department of Public Health)

This can be accomplished by:

- Developing and disseminating materials on risk factors and the types and causes of work-related injuries to teens in Massachusetts, including MA-specific injury data;
- Providing information on the child labor laws;
- Developing guidelines to assess general physical fitness for work, including such issues as heavy lifting, exposure to allergens, and inadequate opportunities to eat and rest.

¹⁷ Government-funded Job Readiness and Placement Programs refer to employment programs administered by the state’s Workforce Investment Boards.

Recommendation 31: Provide information to health care practitioners about their responsibility, under Massachusetts public health regulations, to report work-related injuries to minors working in the commonwealth.¹⁸

(Lead Agency: MA Department of Public Health)

This can be accomplished by:

- Disseminating existing materials on the requirements and procedures for reporting work-related injuries to minors;
- Using local medical organizations and newsletters as a forum for discussing health care practitioners' responsibilities under the regulations; and
- Providing technical assistance to health care practitioners as necessary to help them comply with the reporting regulations.

¹⁸ Under 105 CMR 300.000, physicians practicing in Massachusetts are required to report certain occupational diseases and injuries to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Physicians must report serious occupational injuries to persons less than 18 years of age within ten days of diagnosis. Hospitals must report all work-related injuries to persons under the age of 18 at least semi-annually.

Infrastructure Support

Goal: A strong statewide infrastructure exists to promote positive and safe employment for youth in Massachusetts.

According to the Institute of Medicine's Committee on *the Health and Safety Implications of Child Labor*, certain systems must be in place to ensure the safety and health of young workers. These include mechanisms for collecting reliable data on youth employment and work-related injuries sustained by teens to guide policies and programs, appropriate and enforceable child labor laws, and collaboration among relevant state agencies involved with youth employment. The Committee also called for increased efforts to develop and provide information and training to reduce the risks and enhance the benefits associated with youth employment. Each of these components - data collection, laws and enforcement, interagency collaboration, and education and training - is essential, and all are interdependent.

Currently in Massachusetts, a number of state and federal agencies participate in these efforts; however, there is no formal mechanism for interagency collaboration. Private sector organizations including businesses, unions, public health advocacy and education organizations, likewise have roles to play, yet do not have a vehicle for sharing information and coordinating their efforts. Resources for training youth and employers regarding young worker health and safety and the child labor laws are few. Demand for information and training far exceeds the state's capacity to respond. In addition, available data on youth employment and teen work injuries are limited and the child labor laws need to be updated to reflect safety and education concerns faced by today's youth.

Consequently, ongoing efforts to ensure the health and safety of youth workers are fragmented and inefficient and there are significant gaps. To remedy this situation, Massachusetts must build a strong statewide infrastructure that will coordinate and maximize private and public resources to promote positive and safe work experiences for youth. Such an infrastructure is necessary to successfully carry out many of the recommendations in this report.

Objective 1	Reliable information on work-related injuries to youth and the extent of youth employment in Massachusetts is available to guide efforts to prevent work-related injuries to youth.
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Recommendation 32: Maintain and enhance the existing Massachusetts statewide surveillance system for work-related injuries to youth.

Information about where and how young workers are injured on the job can be used to target and evaluate prevention efforts, specifically to:

- Document the magnitude of the problem in the state and in communities;
- Identify high risk industries and occupations where prevention efforts are needed;
- Inform the development of technological interventions and educational materials to reduce the number of injuries among working youth; and
- Serve as a basis for assessment of the current child labor laws.

Recommendation 33: Explore centralizing data from the work-permit system to track the extent and distribution of youth employment in Massachusetts.

The work permit system could provide additional detailed information about youth employment in Massachusetts, which could be used to inform local as well as statewide priorities and programs. (See Recommendation 11.)

Objective 2	Massachusetts child labor laws are effectively enforced and reflect current conditions at workplaces where youth are commonly employed.
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Recommendation 34: Amend the state laws governing the allowable work hours (per day and per week), as well as the starting and stopping times, for 14 and 15 year old adolescents to be consistent with the more stringent federal laws.¹⁹



Recommendation 35: Regularly review and update the Massachusetts child labor laws to ensure effectiveness in protecting today's youth at work.

This can be accomplished by:

- Reviewing and considering amendments to update the state statutes that prohibit certain occupations for minors, to ensure that the protections are appropriate for the workplaces in which minors are employed;
- Reviewing and considering amendments to the state statutes governing the allowable hours (per day and per week), as well as the starting and stopping times, for 16 and 17 year old teens, in light of the scientific literature on risks to adolescents;²⁰ and
- Reviewing and considering amendments to the state statutes to eliminate contradictions and to clarify ambiguous language.

DISSENTING OPINION: Representatives of the business that most consistently participated in the writing of this report did not agree with Task Force Recommendations 34 and 35 to amend the child labor laws pertaining to hours of work and prohibited occupations.

(Lead Agencies: MA State Legislature and the MA Office of the Attorney General)

¹⁹ Both federal and state child labor laws set limits on the allowable hours of work and starting times and stopping times for minors aged 14 and 15 years old. The federal law, which is more stringent in this case, applies in workplaces that are governed by both state and federal law. There are very few workplaces in Massachusetts that are not covered by federal law.

²⁰ The Massachusetts child labor laws set limits on the allowable hours of work and starting times and stopping times for minors aged 16 and 17 years old. These hours have not been revised in decades.

Objective 3 Government agencies coordinate their efforts to protect young workers in the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 36: Establish a permanent, formal inter-agency working group to promote healthful employment for youth in Massachusetts.

These agencies would include:

- MA Office of the Attorney General;
- MA Department of Education;
- MA Department of Public Health;
- MA Department of Labor & Workforce Development;
- MA Department of Employment & Training;
- US Department of Labor (Wage & Hour Division and Occupational Safety & Health Administration); and
- MA Department of Industrial Accidents.

Recommendation 37: Establish memoranda of understanding to formalize the referrals and information sharing among the above agencies.

Objective 4 Institutionalize non-governmental efforts to protect young workers as a means of providing leadership and coordination between public and private sector agencies and organizations in order to promote safe and positive work experiences for all youth in the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 38: Establish a non-governmental, statewide Center for Young Worker Safety.

The Center for Young Worker Safety would:

- Play a central role in facilitating many of the recommendations in this report;
- Serve as a vehicle for coordinating stakeholders (e.g., representatives from government agencies, employers, unions, educators, parents, health care practitioners, and teens) to avoid redundancy and maximize use of available resources. Representatives of these stakeholder groups would be enlisted to serve on an Advisory Board to provide direction to the Center and assure that the Center is responsive to local needs;
- Serve as a statewide clearinghouse for materials and information on young worker health and safety and the child labor laws by identifying, compiling, and disseminating existing educational resources, and developing and disseminating new materials as needed;
- Provide training to educators, job placement personnel, summer jobs program staff, and others regarding health and safety for young workers;
- Develop and maintain a website to serve as a state resource on young worker health and safety and the child labor laws for youth, parents, employers, educators, and health care providers;
- Promote sharing of effective strategies for reaching youth and promoting safe work for youth among employers, schools, and communities throughout the state and with stakeholders in other states; and
- Foster research by local academic institutions on issues confronting young workers in Massachusetts.

APPENDIX A

EXISTING EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING MATERIALS ON THE CHILD LABOR LAWS AND YOUNG WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY

The following materials were developed collaboratively by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Education Development Center, Inc. with funding from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents.

- *Safe Work/Safe Workers*. This four-hour curriculum with video provides teens with basic information about workplace health and safety. It is designed for use in schools and job training programs.
- *Protecting Your Working Teen: A Guide for Parents*. This brochure provides parents with information on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety issues. It also includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of the agencies to contact for further information and assistance on matters relating to youth employment.
- *Do You Work? Protect your Health, Know Your Rights*. This brochure provides working teens with information on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety issues and their rights in the workplace. It also includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of the agencies to contact for further information and assistance on matters relating to youth employment.
- *Massachusetts Employers Guide: Young Worker Health & Safety and the Child Labor Laws*. This brochure provides employers with information on the child labor laws and young worker health and safety issues and includes a poster of the laws.
- *Protecting Working Teens: A Guide for Health Care Providers*. This brochure provides information on young worker health and safety and the child labor laws as well as advice on counseling teen patients about workplace health and safety.
- *Reporting Occupational Diseases and Injuries: The Physician's Responsibility Under State Public Health Law*. This brochure provides health care professionals important information regarding their responsibilities to report work related injuries to youth and the procedures they must follow when reporting this information to the Department of Public Health.
- *Under 18 and hurt on the job?: Information on Workers' Compensation*. This brochure explains a young worker's rights under workers' compensation.
- *Know Your Rights Poster*. This is a poster listing the rights of young workers regarding wages and hours.

APPENDIX B

MASSACHUSETTS YOUNG WORKER INITIATIVE TASK FORCE *PARTICIPANTS* (listed alphabetically)

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Staff from the following government agencies provided technical assistance to the Task Force. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the positions of these agencies.

Occupational Health Surveillance Program
Bureau of Community and Family Health
MA Department of Public Health

Wage and Hour Division
US Department of Labor, Boston District
Office

Occupational Health and Safety
Administration
US Department of Labor, Boston Regional
Office

Fair Labor & Business Practices Division
MA Office of the Attorney General

MA Department of Education

MASSACHUSETTS YOUNG WORKER INITIATIVE TASK FORCE REPORT *REVIEWERS*
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APPENDIX C

THE WORK PERMITTING PROCESS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Currently, in order to perform work in Massachusetts a 14 or 15 year old is required to obtain an *employment permit*, and a 16 or 17 year old is required to obtain an *educational certificate* (for most jobs). Teenagers obtain employment permits and educational certificates from the school districts in which they live. Either the school Superintendent or the Superintendent's designated representatives must issue these documents. To obtain an employment permit, the teen obtains a blank promise of employment card from the school district in which s/he lives and has the form filled out by his or her prospective employer. A physician must then sign the form, indicating that the teen is medically fit for the proposed work. This form is taken to the school where the designated work permit issuing agent reviews it to determine if a permit should be issued. If the permit is issued, it must be signed by the issuing agent and the youth at the school office, and then signed by the parent or legal guardian, and given to the employer, who holds the permit until the teen reaches the age of 16 or terminates employment. Upon termination, the employer returns the permit to the school district where it was issued.

The process for obtaining *educational certificates* has fewer steps. After being offered a job, the teen describes the job and presents proof of age to the school Superintendent's designee, who issues an educational certificate for that job. This certificate is likewise given to the employer and returned to the school district upon termination of employment.

APPENDIX D

MISSION AND GOALS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS YOUNG WORKER INITIATIVE

Mission

The mission of the Massachusetts Young Worker Initiative is to develop a comprehensive state strategy to reduce work-related injuries and to promote positive and healthy employment for youth in Massachusetts.

Goals:

- Develop a systematic approach to educate teens, their parents, employers, educators, and other professionals who work with youth about the labor laws and issues of workplace health and safety.
- Create a central body within the state to coordinate this systematic educational effort and the collection of data on injuries and illnesses to young workers in the commonwealth.
- Review Massachusetts' current labor laws and develop recommendations where necessary, to ensure that the state's child protective legislation is up to date and relevant for today's working youth.
- Enhance coordination among government agencies whose work relates to the employment and education of youth.
- Foster research on the issues confronting young workers with a particular emphasis on occupational health and safety.

APPENDIX E

MASSACHUSETTS AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS

Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General

The Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General is responsible for enforcing the state laws that govern the employment of minors under the age of eighteen. The Office's Fair Labor and Business Practices Division provides speakers for employers, schools and employee and advocacy groups. The Division also staffs a hotline Monday through Friday, 9 am – 5 pm.

Contact:

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Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Surveillance Program *Teens at Work Injury Surveillance & Prevention Project*

The *Teens at Work Project* collects and analyzes data on work-related injuries to teens in Massachusetts in order to guide prevention efforts. Project staff also conduct interviews with injured teens to learn more about teen work experiences and the circumstances surrounding their injury. Since 1993, more than 4,600 cases of work-related injuries have been reported to the surveillance system from a variety of data sources (primarily workers' compensation records for five or more lost workday injuries and records from a sample of hospital emergency departments). Data are used to target high-risk industries, occupations and worksites for intervention. Over the years, the *Teens at Work Project* has also worked in collaboration with other agencies and organizations to develop and disseminate educational materials on health and safety and child labor laws for teens, parents, employers, and health care providers, and to provide health and safety training for youth, educators, and employers. Funding for the *Teens at Work Project* is provided by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health through a cooperative agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (U01-OH07301).

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**Department of Education
School to Career Cluster**

The Department of Education's School to Career Cluster is responsible for the work-based learning agenda for all Massachusetts secondary students in job/internships. It provides resources and technical assistance to the 16 Workforce Investment Boards and 36 Local Partnerships to support the development and implementation of this agenda. Through Connecting Activities over 24,000 students are served annually through brokered employment opportunities. Three years ago, the Department of Education developed and implemented a Work Based Learning Tool Kit and is currently utilized statewide. The tool kit includes a "Teen Health & Safety" module that provides students, employers, and parents with health and safety guidelines and training materials.

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**US Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division**

The Wage and Hour Division enforces the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which includes child labor provisions that are designed to provide protection to minors under 18 years of age in terms of their safety as well as protecting their educational opportunities. The FLSA restricts the minimum age in non-agricultural employment to 14 years of age for most employment, and restricts occupations and hours/time standards for minors ages 14 and 15 years old. In addition, the Act prohibits the employment of minors under the age of 18 in occupations declared hazardous under the seventeen hazardous orders issued by the Department of Labor.

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**United States Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

The mission of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) is to save lives, prevent injuries and protect the health of America's workers. OSHA and its state partners have approximately 2100 inspectors, plus complaint discrimination investigators, engineers, physicians, educators, standards writers, and other technical and support personnel spread over more than 200 offices throughout the country. This staff establishes protective standards, enforces those standards, and reaches out to employers and employees through technical assistance and consultation programs. Included in this effort are innovative and sustained initiatives aimed at protecting young workers.

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**University of Massachusetts Lowell
Youth Employment Project**

The Youth Employment Project at UMass, Lowell provides education and training for local employers of teens, is developing contacts with parents and community leaders and provides advice on occupational safety and health problems for working teenagers. The project has also conducted a major survey of teens and their working lives and has developed an advisory board to further aid the development of the Project.

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Education Development Center, Inc.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), a non-profit organization, has partnered with the University of California at Berkeley to create the Young Worker Safety Resource Center (YWSRC). With a grant from OSHA, the YWSRC provides training to state and local staff from job readiness programs, especially: school-to-career programs; workforce investment boards; and transition-to-work programs for youth with disabilities. The training prepares these professionals to use the curriculum, *Safe Work/Safe Workers*, to teach teens about occupational health and safety. The YWSRC also provides workshops for employers of youth and occupational safety educational resources to agencies and organizations serving youth.

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Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH) works with residents, community groups, and unions to foster safe, secure jobs and healthy communities in central and eastern Massachusetts through training, organizing and community-labor alliances. MassCOSH provides training and technical assistance to enable young workers and adults to identify hazards and develop strategies to address them. MassCOSH also provides information and training to teachers and youth employment counselors on workplace health and safety issues and young workers' rights. MassCOSH has recently launched a youth peer leadership program to engage teens in efforts to promote safe and healthy work opportunities.

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